GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
POWER
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:461
ANSWERED ON:20.02.2009
POWER THEFT
Dhotre Shri Sanjay Shamrao;Rao Shri Kavuru Samba Siva

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incidents of theft of electricity is hampering the growth of power sector in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to launch an action plan to check the theft of power in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be launched?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (e) : Theft of electricity is one of the major contributing factors impacting the financial health of power utilities adversely. This also contributes to poor quality of power supply, frequent load shedding and unscheduled outages. To enable effective control of theft of electricity, the Electricity Act, 2003 has incorporated specific provisions for detection of theft, speedy trial of theft related offences and also for the recovery of the charges of electricity stolen. Based on the feedback from the States and other stakeholders, the Central Government has further strengthened the theft related provisions in the Act by enacting the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2007. By this amendment Act, theft of electricity has been explicitly made a cognizable and non-bailable offence. The distribution licensees have been empowered to disconnect the supply of electricity upon detection of theft. The penalty for repeated theft of electricity by large consumers has also been enhanced.

The Central Government has built a national consensus to focus on a time bound programme for reduction of Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses. In the Chief Ministers` Conference held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 28th May 2007, a unanimous resolution was adopted which inter alia included the commitment of the States, with appropriate assistance from the Centre, to establish the necessary baseline data and information technology applications for energy accounting and auditing, and for ensuring a steep reduction in loss in electricity distribution. In the Conference, the States committed themselves to achieve and sustain reduction in the overall AT&C losses in the next five years.

The Government had launched the Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) in the year 2002-03 with the objective of encouraging reforms, reducing AT&C loss, improving quality of supply of power and improving consumer satisfaction. The Government has approved the continuation of APDRP during the XI Five Year Plan with revised terms and conditions as a Central Sector Scheme. The focus of the programme is on actual, demonstrable performance in terms of loss reduction. In the project area, the State Power Utilities are expected to achieve Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) loss reduction target of 15%. The Utilities are also to achieve the following target of AT&C loss reduction at utility level:

Utilities having AT&C loss above 30%: Reduction by 3% per year,

Utilities having AT&C loss below 30%: Reduction by 1.5% per year.

Establishment of reliable and automated systems for sustained collection of accurate base line data, and the adoption of Information Technology in the areas of energy accounting are the necessary pre-conditions before sanctioning any projects for strengthening & up-gradation of sub- transmission and distribution networks. Urban areas − towns and cities with population of more than 30,000 (10,000 incase of special category states) are to be covered under the restructured programme. Projects under the scheme are to be taken up in Two Parts. Part-A is to include the projects for establishment of baseline data and IT applications for energy accounting / auditing & IT based consumer service centers. Part-B includes regular distribution strengthening projects. Scheme also contains provision of incentive for utility staff in towns where AT&C loss levels are brought below the base line levels.